



The United Arab Emirates' Maj. Salem Ali Al Mazrooei (left) and Britain's Maj. Peter Rafferty are among CGSC's students.

CGSC INTERNATIONAL

Story by SPC Christopher J. Dunphy

SINCE 1894, when Swiss officer Lt. Henri LeComte became the first international student to attend the Command and General Staff Officer Course, more than 6,000 officers from 142 countries have completed the course. Of these graduates, 23 have become their country's head of state. Almost half of them have

reached the rank of general, and more than 300 have served their countries as ambassadors or key cabinet members.

"Our alumni are truly international," said LTC Patrick Madden, chief of the Command and General Staff College's International Officer Student Division at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. "We are, in fact, training the future leaders of the world."

During the 1998-1999 school year, there were 89 officers representing 75

countries enrolled in the CGSOC. The process that determines which countries and officers are ultimately selected is complex, and is based on geopolitical considerations, Madden said.

"Each U.S. military regional commander in chief, as part of his theater strategy, determines which country he wants to provide training to," Madden said. "The State Department controls which countries the

SPC Christopher J. Dunphy is a staff writer for the Fort Leavenworth Lamp.

CINC can evaluate, but the CINC determines which countries he wants to select. He'll then submit that list to the Pentagon, which will put together the final list that comes to me."

Madden said a variety of criteria are used for determining which countries are selected.

"Some may be under sanction. Some, we're at war with. Some may not be considered a priority in U.S. national interests," he said. "So it's very fluid, a very dynamic process, and it changes quite a lot."

Madden said his staff's primary mission is to support the objectives of his higher headquarters, the Security Assistance Training Field Activity at Fort Monroe, Va. SATFA manages the Army Security Assistance Training Program, which oversees U.S. training of international military students across the country and overseas.

U.S. military departments and the U.S. Coast Guard offer more than 2,000 courses at more than 150 military schools throughout the United States and abroad. In fiscal year 1998 alone, more than 7,000 international students, including military personnel, were trained at U.S. Army installations.

Through training and close interaction among the United States and selected countries, SATFA hopes to accomplish its primary focus of

enhancing relations between the United States and each country's military. The agency also hopes to establish "valuable friendships and channels of communication with foreign governments and military forces to promote democratic principles throughout the world," Madden said.

Madden said he and his staff of five accomplish this mission through a variety of methods.

"We provide three sponsor families for every international officer who attends CGSOC," Madden said. "I'm only required to have one, but I choose to have three for two reasons: It gives the officer a much more comprehensive understanding of American society, and sustains constant contact with that officer."

Madden explained that by having three sponsors one can always step in if one, for whatever reason, becomes unavailable.

Madden said sponsorship families are volunteers who agree to take on responsibilities for one year.

Before the academic year begins, international students attending CGSOC must complete the International Officer Preparatory Course and the CGSOC Preparatory Course.

Madden said both courses focus on acclimating the international students to the United States, with the International Officer Preparatory Course geared more toward understanding American culture, society and institu-

tions. One of the main goals in the course is preparing the international officer, or IO, for the American classroom.

"They have to get used to small-group instruction," he said. "For many of them, this will be a very strange experience — the fact that they can question an instructor is foreign to some of them. But 47 percent of their grade is based on how they interact with their instructors and within the classroom. So there are a lot of things I have to overcome very quickly to get them ready to go to college."

The CGSOC Preparatory Course covers military subjects, emphasizing "the American Army way of war — our products, methodology, tactics and

"Our alumni are truly international," said LTC Patrick Madden, chief of the Command and General Staff College's International Officer Student Division. "We are, in fact, training the future leaders of the world."



International students attending CGSC pose outside the Kansas state capitol in Topeka. Other local trips include a visit to a large corporation and a presidential library.



the 'acronym soup' we all deal with," Madden said.

The CGSOC curriculum includes the elective "Know Your World" program, in which international students have the opportunity to share their nation's culture, history and military background with other students.

To help facilitate an understanding of U.S. military history, the course includes a class on the Civil War, which culminates in a three-day battlefield tour of Gettysburg, Pa.

To further contribute to the IO's understanding of American society, institutions and goals, the Department of Defense created an informational program to help students become involved with the local community and provide them with a balanced view of American society to go along with the military training, Madden said.

International students receive a full year-long itinerary of local and cross-country trips, deliberately planned to broaden their understanding of American society.

Madden said the trips expose the IOs to the democratic ideals of an elected government, and the roles and relationships of a culturally diverse society — and population.

"We show them the infrastructure of small-town America, where we meet everybody from the chief of police to the mayor," he said. "We also take them to Fort Leavenworth's Frontier Day to show them what America looked like in the 1850s."



CGSC students present their nations' colors during the annual international flag ceremony at Fort Leavenworth.

Other local trips include a visit to a large corporation in Kansas City and a tour of a presidential library. State trips include a nuclear power plant, a trip to a Fortune 500 company and a trip to the University of Kansas, where the international officers are exposed to the concept of ROTC.

"Many of these countries only commission their officers through military academies, whereas 70 to 75 percent of our officers go through ROTC," he said.

National trips include a staff ride to



The children of CGSC international students take part in the Teddy Bear Parade, part of an annual summer event sponsored by the Leavenworth Historical Society.

Maggie Patterson

Building Lifetime Friendships

By SPC Christopher J. Dunphy

EACH year approximately 90 military officers from around the world travel to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to attend the Command and General Staff Officer Course. For many of these officers, it is their first up-close glimpse of American life, customs and culture.

To help ease the officers' transition into American society, the Command and General Staff College established a sponsorship program extending from the fort to the towns of Leavenworth, Lansing and Kansas City. According to LTC Patrick Madden, chief of the International Officer Student Division at CGSC, the school tries to assign three sponsor families to each international officer. One of the families is military and the other two are civilians. Together, they introduce the international officers, known as "IOs," to American life.

All active-duty officers in the ranks of captain through colonel who are assigned to Fort Leavenworth are eligible to sponsor international students.

"Many of us know from our own experience that moving to a strange land with unfamiliar customs, laws and bureaucracies can be very stressful and frustrating," said Madden. "What were simple tasks at home become more challenging. The sponsorship program helps reduce this associated stress and smooth the transition of the IO and his or her family into our community, and helps them to enjoy a positive Leavenworth experience."

It was this philosophy that prompted Col. Richard Stark and his family to sponsor an officer from Tunisia.

"I'd just spent a year as a liaison officer in Korea," said Stark, "where I was around very few Americans. It was always nice when Korean officers would help me by showing me their customs and culture. So I understand better than most what the students go through. The Tunisian officer has no family here, and there are no other Tunisian officers. So it's important that somebody tries to help him in this country that

Washington, D.C., with visits to all three branches of the government, a reception with the ambassadors from the students' countries and a symbolic wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

For Singapore's Maj. Lee Tan, a 1999 CGSOC graduate, the trips were especially memorable because he could share them with his fellow international officers.

"I went on almost all of the trips," he said. "And though I'd been to Washington before, what I enjoyed this time was seeing it again in the company of the other officers."

Tan said he also enjoyed seeing Gettysburg, and the glimpse it gave him into America's view of its past.

"I was very impressed by how well maintained the battlefield was," he said. "A lot of countries would not have kept up so well a remembrance of a painful part of their history — of a civil war involving so much infighting. But the United States has embraced it."

Overall, he said, the variety of trips provided him a view of American life

he could not have received elsewhere.

"I've certainly developed a more informed opinion of the U.S. government and how its policies are formulated, and a better understanding of American culture in general by being immersed in it, than by watching CSPAN or local television back home," Tan said.

Madden said there's a joke told at CGSC regarding the number and variety of trips that the IOs participate in. "It's said that by the time the IOs get done graduating, they would have seen more of the United States than most American officers have." □

The International Officer preparation course gives foreign students the skills and insights they'll need to fully participate in the small-group setting of CGSC classes.

International students receive a year-long itinerary of local and cross-country trips, planned to broaden their understanding of American society.



SPC Christopher J. Dunphy

probably seems very strange."

"You don't need to know their language or have any special skills to be a sponsor," agreed Victoria Howard, wife of CGSOC student MAJ Patrick Howard and cosponsor of Japanese Lt. Col. Takashi Motomatsu. "You just need a willingness to put yourself in another person's position and realize that if you were in their position, you'd want someone to show you the ropes, too."

Sponsors and IOs participate in a number of IOSD-coordinated events throughout the year, including a Fourth of July picnic, a Fall Food Fair, with national dishes prepared by the both IOs and American sponsors, "Know Your World" presentations and a trip to the Kansas City Zoo.

The final social event is the International Officers' Sponsor Recognition and Farewell reception.

Madden said there is also a plan to design a hallway within a CGSC facility on Fort Leavenworth in honor of IO sponsors. Expected to open by late spring of 2000, the hallway will house memorabilia, provide a display recognizing all current and long-term sponsors, and outline the overall context and information about the sponsorship program.

More important than the formal functions prepared for the sponsors and the IOs are the activities they participate in outside of the CGSC, Madden said.

"The sponsors provide the IO and family with the necessary knowledge, support and life skills necessary to live in America," he said. "They greet the family when it arrives, and assist the newcomers in establishing their household. They also help them with in-processing — getting ready for school, introducing the family to the post and local area facilities."

More important, he said, the sponsors help the IO and family understand American values, customs, and traditions by including them in holiday celebrations, visits to local points of interest and leisure activities.

"I feel the main purpose in sponsorship is to help the students get over their culture shock by being their friend," said Stark.

His wife, Janet, agrees. She said that the key for establishing a strong, effective friendship with the IO is to involve the officer in family activities.

"Being a sponsor is very rewarding," said Janet, "because both sides benefit. You're each learning about another lan-

guage, another culture."

"You can read all the books you want, and I've got a couple of shelves worth on Japan," said Howard, who speaks fluent Japanese. "But until you've spoken to Japanese people and gotten to know them, then you don't know the Japanese culture. And they learn new things about the United States, too. So both sides do benefit."

"When our officer returns to his country, I want the military of Tunisia to understand that the American military is 'good people.' We're no different than they are. We may speak a different language, but we all laugh the same and cry the same," Stark said. "So it's important that when he goes back to his country he'll know that most Americans are pretty straight and decent people, and I know I'll know the same by understanding more about his country and the things he teaches us."

"Basically, we're developing friendships," Madden said. "Some of these relationships have lasted more than 30 years. We have officers flying in here almost on a weekly basis to visit their former support families, so this isn't really a one-year cycle. We're building friendships that last a lifetime." □